



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
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IN REPLY REFER TO:
C38 (GRCA 8211)

FEB 01 2012



Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Intermountain Region

From: Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park *David V. Hensley*

Subject: Request for Approval to Eliminate the Sale of Water in Individual Disposable Containers

On December 14, 2011, Director Jarvis issued policy on the recycling and reduction of disposable plastic water bottles in parks. The policy stated "Where appropriate, superintendents may request approval from their regional director to eliminate the sale of water in disposable plastic bottles by analyzing and addressing the following factors – in writing." By copy of this memorandum, Grand Canyon National Park (GRCA) is requesting approval to eliminate the sale of water in individual disposable containers (under one gallon), such as plastic water bottles and boxed water.

Grand Canyon National Park has experienced an increasing amount of litter associated with disposable plastic bottles along trails both on the rim and within the inner canyon. These bottles are also the largest contributor to litter in the area where items blow and fall below the rim, an area that can be dangerous to access and clean. In addition, waste associated with disposable bottles has become a significant part of the park's waste stream, comprising an estimated 20% of the park's overall waste stream and 30% of the park's recyclables.

Significant environmental and monetary costs are associated with the removal of litter, transport of waste and recyclables, disposal of non-biodegradable plastics in landfills, and recycling of plastics. As a fiscally responsible, Climate Friendly Park, GRCA is interested in minimizing all of these costs and believes that the most effective way to do so would be to eliminate the sale of water packaged in individual disposable containers (of less than one gallon).

While we realize that a ban on the sale of water in disposable containers is only one of the actions that can be taken, the park has already implemented a robust recycling program (currently, about 35% of the park's waste stream is diverted to recycling, and our goal is to increase that percentage to 50%); and over the last year, we have engaged in an education program intended to increase visitor use of refillable water bottles and decrease dependence on water sold in disposable plastic bottles. While the sales numbers included in our impact analysis indicate that these efforts have been successful, the dramatic increase in Grand Canyon Association's (GCA) sales of reusable water bottles after they voluntarily discontinued the sale of bottled water indicates to us that far greater success can be achieved by eliminating the sale of water in disposable containers throughout the park while still providing a safe and enjoyable experience.

For these reasons, we respectfully request permission to eliminate the sale of water packaged in individual disposable containers of less than one gallon in GRCA. Attached please find the required analysis of the



potential impacts/effects of a ban on the sale of water in individual disposable containers in the park per the Director's policy memorandum.

Attachments

Concur: John Wessels

Date: 2/2/12